

The Argument vpon the seconde Epistle of S. Paul the Apostle to the Thessa|lonians by Des.  
Erasmus of Rote|rodame.

**F** Orasmuche as Paul coulde not haue libertie to goe see the Thessalonians agayne, he confirmeth their consciences by Epistle, that they myght manfully suffre the afflictions layed vpon them for Christes sake: seeyng that they shall not want reward, nor the aduersaries escape punishmēt. Algaïne, concerning the daye of the Lordes cumming, wherof he touched somewhat in the farther Epistle, he warneth them that they be not styrred with the sayinges of some, that affirme as though it were at hande: and as some thinke signifieth closely that the Empire of Rome must be first dispatched and Antichriste to come after that. Moreouer he beateth into theyr heades very earnestly, to restrayne suche as with their idlenes & nice curiositie haue been disturbers of the com|mune quietnes and ordre: and to enforce them vnto la|bour, in asmuche as Paul himselfe laboured among them with his owne handes. This Epistle he wrote from Athens by thesame men that he sente the farther Epistle by, as it is recorded by our argu|mentes.

The ende of the argumente.

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The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the. ii. Epistle of S. Paul to the Thessalonians.

The fyrste Chapter.

The texte.

Paul & Syluanus & Timothe. Vnto the congregacion of the Thessaloniās, in god our father, and in the Lord Iesus Christ. Grace be vnto you, and peace from god our father, & from the Lord Iesus Christ. We are bound to thanke God alwayes for you brethren (as it is mete) because that your fayth groweth excedyngly, and euery one of you swymmeth in loue toward another betwene your selues, so that we our selues boast of you in the congre|gacions of God, ouer your pacience, and fayth in all your persecucyons and tribulacyons, that ye suffer, whiche is a token of the ryghtewes iudgement of God, that ye are counted worthy of the kyngdome of God, for which ye also suffer. It is verely a ryghtewes thyng with God, to recompence tribulacion to them that trouble you: and to you which are troubled, rest with vs, when the Lord Iesus shal shewe hymselfe from heauen with the angels of hys power, with flaminge fyre, whiche shall rendre vengeance vnto them that knowe not God, and that obey

not the Gospell of our Lord Iesus Chryst, whiche shalbe punyshed with euerlastinge damnacyon, from the presence of the Lorde, and from the glorye of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in hys saynctes, and to become maruelous in al them that beleue: because our testimonye that we had to you, was beleued euen thesame daye. Wherefore also, we praye alwayes for you, that our God wyll make you worthy of thys callyng and fulfyll all delectacyon of goodnes, and the woorke of fayth with power: that the name of our Lorde Iesus Christ maye be glorified by you, and ye by hym, accor|dyng to the grace of our God and of the Lord Iesus Christ.

**P**aul and Siluanus and Tymothe, vnto the company of the faithfull that are assembled in spirite at Thessalonica, and be of one mynde towards god our father and the Lord Iesus Chryst. We are bounden to render aboundaunt thanks allwayes to god for his aboundaunt liberalitye to you warde, in that you dooe not onelye through his helpe continue sted|faste in those thinges that you haue begon, but also for that you daylye encrease excedinglye more and more in faythe and loue among your selues one to an other, so muche that I thynke it not necessarie now to kyndle you vnto the applyeng of godlynes by the examples of other, seyng we rather make boaste of you to the other cōgregacions of god, and enflame other vnto vertue by your example: in rehearsing your pacience & stedfastnes of faythe in all your persecucions and afflictions, which you suffer, that the iuste iudgemēt of god may be declared in you hereafter, at suche tyme, as whan you haue suffred vexaciō in this world for y<sup>e</sup> glory of his name, he shal admit you into the felowshipe of hys kingdome: And contrary wyse shall commit them vnto eternal punnyshement, that haue persecuted you for mallice of him. For certaynly thys shall be the dealing of goddes righteousnes, to pay vnto either parte rewarde worthie their dedes: to them that punnyshe the innocent, affliction: and to bestowe vnto you that are troubled with vs, refreshing and comforte with vs in that daye, whan the promisses of the gos|pel shall appeare, and whan the Lorde Iesus shal shew himselfe out of hea|uen openly vnto the world, not than after a lowe base degre as he did at his first commyng, but waited vpon with the companyes of angelles, as it is comelye for a myghtie prince: nor than gentill and tractable to heale the wic|ked, but armed with an horrible fierie flame to rendre vengeaunce vnto them that would not knowe god in this world, nor obeye the gospel of our Lorde Iesus Chryste: so as they shall fele by experience that he is righteous and mightie, whom being mercifull and gentill they set naught by: and so as at leaste they maye learne by their owne punyshmentes perforce to confesse the thinges to be true that the gospel spake of. For they, inasmuch as they neuer

made end of their wicked doing, shal suffer paines y<sup>•</sup> neuer shal haue ending: whan they haue loked vpon the diuine face of the lorde and the maiestie of his power, whō thei cōtemned in this world as a rascal or a vile persone. For at his first commyng he came to saue al men, but than he shal come to shewe him selfe gloryous, not in himselfe onely but in al his membres also, that are godly people, to the intent he may appeare wonderful in al them that beleue his gospel. For in that daye the thinges shalbe openly seen of al men in you, which trusted in Christ at our recorde bearing, where y<sup>•</sup> vngodly contemned them and would not beleue: which daye that it maye be prosperous and ioyfull vnto you, we ceasse not to praye to the lord continually for you, that forasmuche as it hath pleased him to call you vnto the hope of thys glorye, the same maye vouchesafe also to bee presentlye ready to helpe you in your trauaile thitherwarde, that your conuexsacion be agreable to your profession, and to consūmate and fynishe perfytely that, which of his goodnesse he hath begonne in you: and to geue strength vnto your soules, that in manfullye bearing the vexations of the vngodly, you maye declare, howe myghtye the assured hope of eternal felycitie is in you, for whose sake you passe not euen vpon the life of your bodies: to the intent y<sup>•</sup> like as Christ glorified the father by his death, & was glorified of hym agayne by his resurreccion: so the name of the lord Iesu Christ maye be glorified now by your sufferance, and you glorified agayn by him in the daye of his commyng, not accordyng to your owne desertes but according to the mercy of our god and of the Lorde Iesu Christe, without whose helpe all that you go about were of none effect.

The. ii Chapter.

The text

We beseche you (brethren) by the commyng of oure Lord Iesu Chryste, and in that we shal assemble vnto him, that ye be not sodenly moued from your mynde, nor be troubled, neith<sup>•</sup>r by spirite, neyther by wordes, nor yet by letter which shulde some to come from vs, as though th<sup>•</sup> daye of Chryst were at hande. Let no man deceaue you by any meanes, for the Lorde shal not come except ther come a departyng fyrst, and that the synful man be opened the soone of perdicyn, which is an aduersary: and is eralted aboue al that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he doth syt in the temple of God, boastynge hymselfe to bee God. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you. I tolde you these thynges? And nowe ye know what with holdeth: euen that he myght be vttered at his tyme. For the misl<sup>•</sup>tery of the unquite doeth all ready worcke: tyll he, which now onelye letteth, be taken out of the wa<sup>•</sup>e. And th<sup>•</sup>n shall that wycked bevtred, whom the Lorde shal consume with the spirite of hys mouth, and shall destroye with the appeareaunce of his commynge.

**F**urthermore brethren, we besech you by this cōmyng of our Lorde Iesu Christ, wherof we spake a littell afore, and by the felowship of the glory, wherby we beying the membres shalbe fastened vnto our head: that you be not sodaynlye moued from the mynde you are in though his commyng be prolonged, and be not alstonied in your myndes, nether by feyned prophecie, ne by probable asserciō, nor by Epistle sēt in our name, as though the commyng of the Lorde were all ready at hand. Let no mā deceaue you by any meanes. For the lorde shal not come, onles a departing come first, & not afore the wicked man appeare, the childe of perdicion, who like as he is much vnlike vnto Christe, so muche is he his

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enemy, & is exalted aboue the sōne of God, & aboue al, that is called God, or power, that is deuoutly wurshipped: so muche that he shall sitte in the temple of God, shewing himselfe as God. Doe you not remembre, that whā I was yet with you, I told you these thinges? And now you know, what is the let, y<sup>t</sup> Christ cummeth not. In dede that the wicked man (as I saied afore) may in his propre tyme openly practise his tyranny vpon the Sainctes. For now wickednesse worketh his crueltie vnderhand by him, and the deuill by wicked menne rageth against the professours of the goslpell, and as you perceyue by my tellyng, there is nothyng that letteth the aduersarie of Christe from shewyng himselfe openly, but only that in the meane while euery one should holde still that he holdeth, vntil that kingdome, wherwith all other are holden in subieccion, be dispatched quyte out of the waye. And as soone as that shall come to passe, than shall that wicked one shew himselfe abroad openly, furnished with al kynde of iuglgling castes and wylie disceytes, to bryng mankynde to destruccion. But for all his rageing with his deuilish spirite, the Lord Iesus shall cheoke him with the mightie blast of his mouthe, and for all his bostyng of his false counterfaite shew of diuinitie, the Lorde shall obscure and abolishe him with the excellente clearenes of his cummyng, euen as monstreous sightes of the night time and vayne appearaunces of thinges vanishe and goe a waye at the shynyng out of the bright sonne beames.

The texte.

Euen hym whose cumming is after the workyng of Satan, with all lying power, signes and woonders: and with all deceyuablenes of vntyghtewesnes, among them that perish: because they receyued not the loue of the trueth, that they might be saued. And therfore, God shall sende them strong delusion, that they should beleue lyes, that all they might be damned whiche beleued not the trueth: but had pleasure in vnrightewesnes. But we are bounde to geue thanks alwaye to God for you (brethren

beloued of the Lord) for because that God hath from the begynnyng chosen you to saluacion, thorow sanctifyeng of the spilrite, and thorow beleuyng of the trueth wherunto he called you by oure Gospel, to obtayn the glory of our lorde Iesu Christ.

For that wylie deceiuer shall at his cūming be furnyshed with the spirite of Satan, for the Deuil shal practise his crueltie by him. And to the intende he maye the more cruelly worke his myschiefe, he shall not onely be armed with a puyssaunt great power, to make mens consciences afayed, but also with lyeng, countrefaict castes of signes and wondres, wherin he shall pretende to folowe Christ, euen as the learned enchauntours folowed the example of Moses among the Egipcians. To be briefe, there shall be no kynde of fraude, but he shalbe perfitely conyng in it to worke wickednesse. Howbeit it shal not auaille him in any wise, but only to the hurting of such, as perishe (though he were not) through their owne vnbelefe. For thus their obstinate rebellion against Christ demeriteth, this is a reward wor|thy their desertes, that seing they receiued not Christ by whom they might haue been saued, who for his charitie sake was desyrous to haue al mēne saued, & for his trueth sake opened playnly the thinges, that belonged to saluacion: now by the suffraunce of God, falsehead taketh place with thē in stede of trueth, tyranny for charite, a destroyour for a saue our: and so as thei shal beleue a wicked mās lyenges, inasmuch as thei refused to beleue the sonne of God y<sup>t</sup>preached nothing but truth. Thus shal it come to passe, y<sup>t</sup>where thei should otherwise haue also perished because of their obstinate

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mysbelefe, than it shall manifestly appeare in all mennes sight, that they are iustly damned, forasmuche as they spightfully forsoke Christe, and gaue credence at the first woorde to a craftie deceiuour and a wicked per|son. This stormy tempest, lyke as it shal declare them worthy damnaciō, so shall it sette forth your stedfastnesse more clearly. By reason whereof we are bounde to rendre alwayes thanks vnto God (my christianly wel|beloued brethren) in that he suffred you not to continue still in errour, but chosed you vnto saluacion from the beginning, not by the meanes of Mo|ses law, but by his owne spirite the geuer of holynes, and by your obediēce wherwith you beleued the trueth simply and playnly. Besydes this, lyke as he chosed you eternally from the begynning, so dyd he call you by our gossell preaching, to the intent the saluacion of you, whiche beleued whan the lewes beleued not, should growe to the glorye of our Lorde Iesus Christe.

The texte.

Therefore brethren stande fast, and kepe the ordinaunces which ye haue learned: whether it were by oure preachynge, or by Epistle. Oure Lorde Iesu Christ hymselfe, and God our fa|ther (which hath loued vs, and hath geuen vs euerlastyng consolacyon, and good hope thorowe grace) comforte youre hertes and stablyshe you in all good saying and doynge.

The gospell that I delyuered vnto you was the true and very right gos|pell, so that there is none other that you ought to loke for. Therefore stand fast in it brethren, and holde the thinges that we delyuered vnto you, and that you learned of vs, eyther by our preachyng, or by our Epistle. Vnto those it shall be your parte to applie your endeuour with all watching dilligence. Moreouer the Lord Iesus Christ hymselfe, and god oure father, which loued vs of his owne accorde, and called vs vnto saluacion, and by his spirite hathe geuen vs eternall consolacion euen in these afflictions, to loke in good hope for the rewardes of the life in heauen, not by meanes of our deseruinges, but by his owne free mercie, comforte your hartes more and more, and establishe and confirme you, to perseuer in all goodnes both in worde and in dede.

#### The .iii. Chapter.

The texte.

Furthermore brethren praye ye for vs, that the worde of God maye haue passage, and be gloryfied, as it is also with you: and that we maye be delyuered from vnreasonable and fro|ward men. For al men haue not fayth: but the Lord is faythfull, which shall stablyshe you, and preserue you from cuyll. We haue confydence thorowe the Lorde to you warde, that ye bothe do, and wyl do the thynges which we commaunde you. And the Lorde gyde your hertes to the loue of God and pacience of Chryste.

**F** Vrthermore brethren, like as we in oure supplicac|ions to god helpe foreward the busynesse of your sal|uacion, euen so it is reasō, that you in semblable case set forward the thinges that I goe about with your prayers to him also: that like as the doctrine of the gospel had spedy & prosperous encrease among you, so it may runne abroad and be published among all menne. For the more spedynesse whereof, praye you, that we maye through his helpe be delyuered from suche men as be peruerse and frowarde, whiche hyndre withall theyr

possible meanes, that the doctrine of Christe be not sown without lette or hinderaunce. For all they beleue not the Gospell that heare the Gos|pell: and yet there is no cause why you should not beleue, for all theyr wicked endeouours. They spurne against the Gospell, but they shall not spurne it away, for it hath a sure protectour euen the Lord Iesus, which shall make you stedfaste against their vnruly wickednesse, and kepe you from euill, and finishe that he hath begunne in you, because he is true in his promisses. He will not fayle to succoure you, so that you fayle not to folowe his goodnesse: he will helpe, but whom▪ those that are diligent ende|uourers. Thus we speake, not that we doubt of your constant stedfast|nes, but we haue rather a firme trust of you, that lyke as by the helpe of the Lord Iesu you doe as we gaue you in commaundemēt, so ye wil doe stil hereafter. To conclude, the Lord Iesus with his grace gouerne your hartes, that they may goe on in the right course, and grow forward in the charitie of God, and in the loking for Iesu Christ. Charitie wil cause you, to study continually to deserue well of all men, like as God is bounteous|ly good to all men: and the loking for Christes commyng, shall make you to abyde manfully all maner of afflictions.

The texte.

We requyre you brethren by the name of our Lorde Iesu Christe, that ye withdrawe your selues from euery brother, that behaueth himselfe inordinately, & not after the instiltucion which he receiued of vs. For ye your selues know, how ye ought to folow vs. For we behaued not our selues inordinately among you. Neither tooke we bread of any man for naught: but wrought with labour & sweate nyght & daye, because we would not be char|geable to any of you: not but that we had autoritie, but to make our selves an eusāple vnto you, to folow vs. For when we were with you, this we warned you of▪ that yf any would not worke, thesame shoulde not cate. For we haue heard saye that there are some whiche walke among you inordinately, workyng not at all, but beyng busybodyes. Them that are suche, we commaunde and exhorte by our Lord Iesu Christ, that they worke with quiet|nesse, and eate theyr owne bread. Brethren, be not ye wery in well doying.

And yf there be any among you, that contemneth to folowe that trade of lyuing, whiche we haue prescribed vnto you after the rule of the gos|pel, and ly•e carelesly as he lusteth himselfe, and through his ydlenes dis|quiet your commune affaires, and yet albeit he doe naught himselfe, is a busye medler of other mennes doinges: we commaunde you by the au|toritie of our Lorde Iesu Christe, that you withdrawe your selves from the company of him, if he haue the name of a christian. For it shall not yrke other to folowe the example of vs, which albeit we vsed both the honour and charge of Apostelship, yet it greued vs neuer a whitte to be brought into a basse ordre among you, and we tooke no more vpon vs



than other men did: insomuche that we tooke not somuche as a piece of breade of a ny mans cost, but we forgote the dignitie of our office, and gatte with the labour of our hādes working day and night, the thinges that were neces|saryly requisite to the vse of our lyuing, because we would be a burthen to no man: Not that we thought it was vnlawfull for vs to doe as the o|ther Apostles doe, but we would not vse our right as we myght haue doen, because we would set our selues for a forme and an ensample, that other men should not be greued to folowe. That whiche we our selues did in dede, we commaunded you in woorde, that yf any would not worke, thesame should not eate.

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Those deserue a liuing, that watchenight and day for your saluaciō. But idle curiositie and curious idleues deserueth no refreshing. For we haue hearde, that there be some among you, that disquiet your order, in that they will not worke, and so hauing naught to doe of theyr owne, they must nedes medle of other mens busynesse. As yet I spare to name them, but whosoeuer they be, we commaunde them and yf they had leauer we should so doe, we hertily beseche them by our Lorde Iesus Christe, that they disturbe not the commune quiet through their idlenes: and that inas|much as they doe naught themselves, they hyndre not other that are oc|cupied, but lette them quietly worke also, getting their liuyng with their owne handes, rather than to be greuouse vnto other with shamles cra|uinges & vnsemelines. In dede they are worthy to haue nay of what they aske, howbeit it stādeth with christian humanitie to doe for them that de|serue litle, eyther for that, that they be men, or because peraduenture they maye amende and be better. Therfore brethren be not you weary of well doying, to the worthy and also to the vnworthy.

The texte.

If any man obey not our saying, sende vs woorde of him by a letter: and haue no com|pany with him, that he may be ashamed. And counte him not as an enemy: but warne him as a brother. The very Lord of peace geue you peace alwayes, by all meanes. The Lorde be with you al. The salutacion of me Paul, with myue owne hande. This is the token in Epistles. So I wryte. The grace of our Lorde Iesus Christe be with you all, Amen.

If there be any mā that despise to doe after our admonicions, aswel that I gaue you when I was present with you, as nowe I wryte beeyng ab|sent from you: let this be a punishmēt ynough for christian charitie, that he may haue a lyuing that is of those condicions, but yet let him be noted in that he is put out of your company, to this only intende that beeyng al|shamed he may repent and amende: And cast him not out as an vtter ene|my, but rather admonishe him as a brother that went astray, whom



your mynde is to haue amended and not destroyed, eschewyng his company so as you may loue him in your hartes neucrthelesse. For y<sup>e</sup> diuorcement that charitie alloweth, is receiued but only for a time, that he that hath offen|ded may repent. Furthermore the Lord Iesus the autor of peace, graunt you perpetuall peace in all your affaires. The Lord be euer with you all. This is the salutacion that I Paul wryte vnto you agayne with myne owne hande. This token you shall obserue in all myne Epistles written eyther to you or other. For I wryte this that no man shall deceyue you by counterfayte let|ters. The fauour and beneuolence of our Lorde Iesu Christe be euermore with you all.

Amen.

¶ Thus endeth the Paraphrase vpon the latter Epistle of S. Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians.